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ABSTRACT

Contending that narrowly focused empirical research on comparative professionalism cannot produce a complete understanding of journalists in developing nations, this paper calls for the development of research methodologies and approaches that will examine journalistic professionalism in the context of the interdependence of mass media and society. Citing the shortcomings of the present empirical approaches, the paper presents a holistic and macroscopic approach for the study of comparative professionalism that draws upon the present situation of the press in developing nations. It then suggests that the journalist's history and sociocultural, political, and economic environment be explored, and concludes that such an approach is necessary to produce a workable conceptual framework with which to study and understand professionalism among journalists in developing nations. (FL)

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RECONCEPTUALIZING THE NOTION OF JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALISM ACROSS DIFFERING PRESS SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION

Last summer the Panax Corporation, a small newspaper group, sent out two news stories to its newspapers with a memo suggesting the stories be run on the front page. Several editors in the chain refused, a fight ensued, and a controversy flared in the trade press. The National News Council censured Panax.

Commenting on the controversy, columnist Nicholas Von Hoffman wrote: "Professionalism in journalism, the insistence there is only one responsible, one competent, one way, the professional way, to do it, imposes a uniformity of value judgement on all. . . The trumpeting of professionalism, the insistence that everyone in the news business give lip service to the professional ideal, lends itself to more abuses than it seeks to cure."[1]

Von Hoffman's thesis was that news organizations should be forthright about their actions and decisions affecting news content. But what is more important here is that his opinion draws attention to the inconsistent leitmotif of professionalism among newsmen. Further, it presents one among many dilemmas for the evaluation of professionalism in the media.

The notion of journalistic professionalism has invoked much interest among investigators. The early 1960s and this decade saw a spurt of literature and data on professionalism and the process of professionalization among journalists. Researchers' opinions regarding the attributes of journalism professionalism, or what constitutes a professional and what does not, has been less than unanimous, and discussion of the subject occasionally has been acrimonious. The purpose of this paper is to raise several general questions about the approaches to professionalism and its relevance to the study of comparative professionalism of journalists in developing countries.

The study of media professionalism has been subjected to varied approaches. Most of these studies have tried to prove a point, namely, that the analysis

of professionalism of journalists around the world is essential to draw conclusions about journalistic standards and status. We do not agree with this presumption. We believe the principal value of the comparative professionalism studies is in providing a deeper understanding of a journalist's role in surroundings different from his contemporary peers in other nations. The value in such studies does not lie in determining how much journalists of other countries veer from the Western conceptions of professionalism.

An examination of the studies on comparative professionalism indicates the lack of a theoretical construct potent enough to approach the subject with some sense of totality. Whether a general theoretical apparatus is justified at all may be open to question. But it is our contention that the mere application of Western-evolved professional attributes to study journalists in developing countries is inadequate. What is lacking is the consideration of different theories of society which are subsumed in any theoretical or paradigmatic approach to evaluate and interpret systematically the various definitions and/or attributes of a professional journalist. Realizing that we may only contribute to an already confused situation, we, nonetheless, present some of our thoughts concerning the study of journalistic professionalism in developing countries.

PROFESSIONALISM IN CONTEXT

In studying journalists of a developing country, it may seem rhetorical to suggest the necessity of considering the very society in which they operate--the cultural, social, historical, political and economic factors which influence performance, ideology, attitudes and ethics. The linkage of "universal" attributes to all journalists around the world is exceedingly tentative, more-so because journalism in those regions has greater and more crucial social obligations than we seem to realize. For instance, in a developing and modernizing society, change is frequently an overriding national priority.

The planned and purposeful use of mass communication outlets such as the press is critical.[2] For the press in developing societies is often regarded as a vehicle to educate people of the expectant changes in the society and to foster public opinion for or against an issue involving social change. So much research seems to avoid these considerations. Ignoring those social factors which influence journalistic performance yields an incomplete, even distorted, view of professionalism.

The study of comparative professionalism is also the study of a complicated cultural, political and socio-economic structure in which the journalist operates. These considerations are important in studying journalists of the Third World, namely African, Asian and Latin American. Though different societies may have some common elements, Third World notions offer a magnification of differences between developing and industrialized countries.

One writer has suggested that "a multi-national group identity for the educators has been established; a multi-national group identity for the (journalism) profession may not be distant."[3] While it is an idealistic point of view, there are basic questions to be asked: Is it logical to expect journalists all over the world to conform to the criteria created by dominant and economically advanced countries? Is a multi-national identity for journalists even desirable?

These questions cannot be answered through easy formulas or universal rules of conduct. As Pye points out, the situation in which our journalism contemporaries operate in developing countries differs immensely; attributes and policies which apply in one setting may be irrelevant to another.[4] One of the first directives for an appropriate examination of comparative professionalism is recognition that the journalist's social environment shapes the character of the journalist and of the mass media.

Professionalism is a concept that has undergone extensive research and application in describing diverse work groups, though not without analytical difficulties and limited application to journalists.[5] The general conceptual approach can be applied both to the study of an occupation and the function and role of the individual. Relevant theoretical dimensions have evolved, such as autonomy, ethics and social responsibility. Certain processes and aspects of interest to professionalism--socialization, training, occupational education, professional "cultures," professional communities of consciousness, the professional organizations and their role ideologies and the presence of a code of ethics--have also been deemed pertinent to the examination of an occupational group, such as journalists.[6]

These dimensions have been applied to the journalist in cross-national settings. Western interest in systematically assessing professionalism as a perspective for comparing and contrasting media systems and journalists emerged in the early 1960s with Head's brief treatment of African journalists.[7] The McLeod-Rush studies comparing Latin American and U.S. journalists provided renewed interest in comparative professionalism.[8] This was followed by Menanteau-Horta's work on Chilean journalists[9], Eapen on Indian newsmen[10], and Nayman-Atkin-O'Keefe on Turkish journalists.[11] Pye also examined the difficulties of role and function confronting the professional journalist and the institution of the press in developing societies,[12] while Windahl and Rosengren evaluated professionalism of Swedish journalists.[13]

In extending the notion of professionalism into the cross-national realm, almost all of these studies concentrated on empirical measurement of attitudes, occupational values, role perceptions and other such variables as training, commitment and responsibility, and existence of professional organizations. These studies were not based on nor have they yielded a firm conceptual framework

for research in comparative professionalism. Moreover, the tendency has been to describe professionalism as being in the likeness of the advanced free press world with its particular pattern of performance, status and social role sanctioned in political theory.

The research trend of applying Western attributes of professionalism to the Third World media has progressed to an extent that it is now being considered part of the wider debate of "cultural imperialism." British scholar Golding views it as the dominance of cultural model and the institutional pattern of the developed countries in the lesser developed ones. Cross-cultural professionalism studies, he observes, are parochial when set within the problems of media organization as the Western world sees them. He cites the example of journalists in Nigeria. The development of professionalism among them "is nothing more than their increasing integration into a community sharing values and standards developed by major western news media. Via formal education and training . . . or from routine dependence on the primary production of world news by European and American media, professionalism is induced in the form of an ideological convergence."[14]

In such circumstances, need for professionalism research set against the background of social objectives and national priorities is apparent. The very avoidance of these factors leaves a vacuum in which imported assumptions become the yardstick for measurement of professional "competence." Attempts to generalize fail to take into account indigenous and innate ideologies. Not many scholars succeed because they are content to apply attributes without undertaking a deeper study of the source of a country's tradition, strength and weakness of its conditioning, formative period and rediscovering of national identity. If we accept that mass media help to organize, integrate and induce social activity, and if we accept that mass media are instruments of education

and instruction in those developing societies, then professionalism research models must overcome the desire for replicability of attributes so common in present approaches.[15]

What follows is a suggested approach to the study of Third World professionalism among journalists. It encompasses five dimensions of investigation--cultural, historical, social, political and economic conditions of the press and society.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

Metaphorically, "culture" refers to the arrangement--the forms--assumed by social existence under determinate historical conditions. The metaphor perceived solely in its heuristic value implies that the term "social" refers to content of relationships with which men involuntarily enter in any social formation; while "culture" refers to the forms which those relationships assume. Therefore, culture in this sense does not refer to something substantially different from "social;" it refers to a different aspect of essentially the same phenomena.[16]

Human culture is the result and record of people's developing mastery over nature, their capacity to modify nature to their use. This is a form of human knowledge perfected through social labor and role specialization, which forms the basis for every new stage in man's production and historical life. It is materialized in production (media are part of it), embodied in social organization (professional associations are part of it), advanced through the development of practical and theoretical technique (education and training for the professional) and preserved in and transmitted through language.[17] As Hall suggests, culture, knowledge and language have their basis in social and material life; they are not independent or autonomous of it. Ideologies are inevitable products of cultures and become a necessary component of any social objective. Culture is

not merely a static structure; it is a process--the process of incorporation. According to Williams, the educational institutions are one of the principal agencies of this process.[18] Mass media and journalists also are a vital part of this process.

Through this educational process, the meanings and values which a nation holds dear are articulated, national priorities among them. Indeed, every nation has priorities, but poorer nations seem to have a pressing urgency to attain them. The ultimate product of the mass media is the journalist's perception of meanings and values, which, in turn, form the basis for journalistic performance and, eventually, their professionalism.

Culture may exert greater influence on peoples of poorer societies who cling strongly to tradition. In Third World countries, apart from shaping social relations and philosophies, culture also shapes people's outlook on education, their longing for modernization and tradition. To an extent, it determines the feasibility of a highly structured and industrialized mass media system--components of a modern communication system.[19] Both as an industry and as a profession, this system depends to an extent on culture to evolve a distinctive set of standards, to generate an ethos and a code for guiding its functions. The journalist's nature and responsibility are shaped within this context. Even the journalist's audiences, which are highly culture-bound in the Third World nations, dictate the ways he performs, the messages he produces. Developing societies, of course, are changing rapidly; and basic communication policies are being reformulated to assure that the media will carry out ascribed functions effectively in the given politico-socio-economic reality.[20] Hence, critical to the determination of institutional function being carried out by the journalist is the cultural context. The rationale for that function, indeed, is the result of the philosophy of man evolved through culture in a given society.

With the gradual decolonization of the Third World, there has been a failure among western scholars to realize that comparing journalistic conditions and practices in developing countries with those of the advanced west is inappropriate, if not farcical. Few attempts have been made to understand the circumstances in which the journalist operates. Consider this: If Lord Cutlip's publish-and-be-damned philosophy is to be pursued in a developing country, it would not be without serious consequences for the profession and the survival of the nation itself.[21]

Such social constraints are numerous for the Third World. A former chairman of the Daily Times of Nigeria recently told a Lagos conference that a news item or editorial that would merely raise eyebrows in England and the U.S. can incite inter-tribal riot or violent anti-government demonstrations in an African country. It could bring down a government. In the absence of a viable opposition party, the result would be chaos and anarchy.[22] The Commonwealth Secretary-General pointed out that the most significant challenge of the press in the traditional societies with different cultures is to mold people into a nation and to free them from poverty: "It may well be that in such conditions the traditional adversary posture of the western press, which implies continual questioning and criticism of all forms of authority, is inappropriate."[23]

Consider the journalistic working conditions in India. Few countries can match that country in cultural diversity, the magnitude of its languages, the number of religions and the resultant multi-structured society. The country faces problems of overpopulation, urbanization, economic growth and illiteracy. These factors present basic problems for working journalists. To be constructive in the developmental process, the journalist has to eschew the traditionalized Western notions of professionalism. The tell-it-like-it-is and the right-to-know journalism would simply add fuel to frustration. Even the Hutchins Report

would seem to agree: ". . . freedom of the press is not an isolated value nor can it mean the same in every society and at all times. It is a function within a society and must vary with the social context."[24]

Compelling questions arising out of contemporary social issues, then, haunt the Third World journalists. How are they to harness and design the mass media to the task of development of the nation? How do professional journalists combat the general problems implicit in the situation of emerging from a traditional role to a more constructive role in executing their obligations to society? For teeming millions struggling to achieve better standards of living, objective reporting and muckraking may mean little. How journalists regard these questions depends largely upon how they conceive of the social and human function of the profession. That, to a significant extent, affects professionalism among Third World journalists.

These issues have to be considered in investigating professionalism among journalists of other countries. For journalists in the western world, and more-so for professionalism researchers, this situation contradicts the yardstick for measurement of autonomy, a generally accepted attribute of professionalism. Even voluntary curbs are seen as a threat to the freedom of a "professional journalist." In transitional societies, and to a large extent in western societies, basic decisions on communication strategy are economic and political and are inextricably linked to the nature of society and its culture. For journalists of the developing regions, decisions on what to communicate depend largely on prior decisions regarding the strategy projected toward progress, change and development. This environment alters and changes the journalist's role and "commitment"[25] accordingly. The necessity of an operative philosophy for journalistic professionalism becomes imperative.

If the function of the journalist is to mediate, then the journalist should be conceived as interposed between those groups or classes of people which constitute the audience for the media, and those whose definitions of social reality and of issues facing society are being communicated.[26] Elliott, writing about the ambivalent relationship between ideology, values and attitudes, cultural production and commercialism in Britain, says that this relationship is expressed in social constraints exerted over media institutions and on the professionals engaged in media production.[27] One constraint we see in this context for the Third World journalists is their class orientation--a dominant social strata in most Asian countries. The social condition of the journalists' loyalty to class interests determines the character of the journalist and his "commitment" to social reality.[28] As a consequence, job orientation through class structure among Third World journalists could have a definite bearing on their professionalism and deserves to be investigated.

Cultural dependence resulting from the imposition of a professional ideology from the outside must be considered in research dealing with comparative professionalism. Rooted in the theory that sees development simply as a process of occupational differentiation, research has led to such conclusions as that of Pye: "In the fundamental sense modernization involves the emergence of a professional class of communicators."[29] Thus, far from being a set of practices which the press of the Third World should acquire to "catch-up," media professionalism is an ideology that has been transferred in the same way that technology has been transferred as part of the general theme of cultural dependence.[30] Relations with the advanced nations at a cultural level "mean briefly that the dominant power (for instance the former colonial power) provides training, teaching and the creative work. . ."[31]

As Golding observes, the "catching-up" thesis implies the professional journalist in the Third World should acquire the attitudes and skills necessary to operate their media in a professional way. This concern, he maintains, has prompted much of the comparative professionalism research, done particularly by western researchers seeking confirmation and replication of their journalistic conventions--in practice of and education for the profession.[32]

McLeod and Rush, for instance, concluded that a majority of Latin American journalists studied "had sufficient media experience to justify the treatment as experienced newsmen comparable to those U.S. newsmen" studied.[33] The Chilean study by Mernanteau-Horta found respondents sharing a "clear professional identification."[34] No matter how significant these studies are, the assumptions appear to be that professionalization should be examined "as the acquisition not merely of competence, but also of values and attitudes thought appropriate to the implementation of media skills."[35] It is in this sense we argue that the concept of professionalism is misused in the context of comparative media studies.

No doubt it is valuable to study the dominance of what Tunstall calls the "Anglo-American notions of professionalism"[36] in the Third World and to examine those traits whose diffusion is taken to "signify" professionalization.[37] Traits or attributes include increased training and professional education, association into professional organization, existence of an ethos of public service and objectivity. Thus, Golding has written: "Professionalization has been, in effect, integration into a dominant global culture of media practices and objectives. . . developed by the advanced industrialized societies."[38] This integration is being achieved through what he calls media imperialism "mechanisms" of institutional transfer, diffusion of occupational ideologies, training and education.

Professionalism in these specific terms, then, is a set of practices whose appropriateness needs to be questioned when applied in comparative studies.

The avoidance of discussing indigenous ideologies and journalistic performance in the context of local surroundings leaves a vacuum in which imported assumptions and conventions become standards by which achievement or professional competence are measured.[39] As a Ghanaian journalist wrote, socio-cultural environment is critical to the determination of professionalism among journalists. Neither the journalist nor the mass media can be really understood apart from the contextual relationships.[40]

The journalist in any society, agrees Merrill, has a basic and dominant psycho-ideological orientation which tends to manifest itself in most of the journalist's thinking and action. This, in turn, has a great deal to do with the kind of ethical outlook one adopts as a journalist and with the journalism practiced.[41] This orientation is primarily influenced by history, culture, socio-economic and political conditions.

Perhaps it is not surprising to see the lack of research of professionalism from a cultural approach. The approach only mirrors the pattern in social science research for, as Carey notes, ". . . the concept of culture is such a weak and evanescent notion in American social thought."[42] Studies in comparative professionalism so far have yielded findings narrow in dimension, short on insight. It seems necessary to evolve an analytical cultural approach for comparative studies in professionalism.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

The combination of historical insight and sociological investigation may provide a new perspective for the study of the journalist in the developing countries.[43] For instance, the fact that the press in the Commonwealth countries evolved under foreign rule and later attempted to adjust to its social needs exposes a researcher to the evolution of the journalist's professional ideology. In these countries professionalization among pressmen did not emerge with the

growth of industry, technology and accompanying social differentiation; it was grafted onto the social system from outside.[44] Under the developing social conditions, however, we see the values and orientations of journalists as constantly changing phenomena, varied in different historical circumstances. Nonetheless, throughout this process, journalistic participation in the realization of historical tasks of the nation remain an overriding directive for the media.

That factor bears an impact on social role. Take India again as an example. Surviving the tests and trials under the British Raj, the Indian press, which served as an effective medium for freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, had established itself as a national institution. Ingrained in it were its own interpretations of the profession's indigenously developed philosophy--leading a reputed journalist to say that journalism, like the world, is ideologically divided.[45] Based on it, the press in India gathered around itself a theory and philosophy of practice which reacts to the country's social and political needs; its ideology derived not necessarily from the west or the east but from a sense of pragmatic nationalism.[46]

With emphasis on social and political change, Gandhi--himself a journalist--used the power of the press to protest against colonial rule while urging people toward self-improvement. He attempted to teach farmers the rudiments of health, urging people to devote their lives to truth, to non-violence, to celibacy, to religious tolerance, to eradication of poverty and to the treatment of untouchables in the society as equals.[47] Even Gandhi, for whom freedom and liberty were indomitable pivots of life, had reservations about an absolute free press in Indian social conditions and preferred certain self-imposed journalistic responsibilities. For him, the true function of a journalist was "to educate the public mind" and to arouse among the masses certain desirable

sentiments.[48] Similarly, historical influence through Nehru's ideas on the journalist's role--which stem from his nineteenth century humanist-liberal presuppositions--can also be summed up: First, individual freedom is essential but carries with it responsibilities; second, if the responsibilities of freedom are not accepted on the basis of self-discipline, the state must resort to an imposed discipline.[49]

Historically, this influence has formed the crux of the ethos that an Indian journalist should be a responsible educator, a crusader of compatible social norms for change and development. If nationalistic responsibility has to serve as the root for diverse journalistic endeavors, then the profession's ideal itself takes a distinctive perspective. The press in India, as shaped by history, should have an educating influence and be an aid to rational thinking, a check against irrational forces and an instrument of nation-building. Journalists should play a crucial role in achieving national priorities. Doing just that, the press in India emerged from the colonial rule as a national institution.

Yet historical adjustment in journalistic ideologies still confound the Third World countries. An example of India again serves as a case in point. In spite of its widely recognized public service in the pre-independence era, the Indian press found itself carrying the ritual of intense criticism into the post-independence period, the most trying period of the nation's development. This prompted a well-known journalist to say: "If press freedom is essentially journalistic freedom, it is necessary to place journalistic purpose broadly against the background of social purposes."[50] Pye also observed that there is substance in this argument that reckless and irresponsible criticism of authority can destroy Third World hopes of building up constructive patterns of government and that it is unrealistic and unhelpful to advocate the Western ideals of journalistic professionalism in such societies.[51] Historically, then, it would

seem that journalists in India and some other developing countries must be free as well as socially sensitive in order to play a constructive role.[52]

The Indian experience, though similar to some extent, may differ from that of other countries. Mass media in parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia did develop almost as derivatives of those in the advanced industrialized countries. But their differing colonial histories carry implications for analysis of professionalism, the role of the journalist and the structure of media institutions. For it is generally the case that professions in those countries had strong ties to the colonial administration. Those ties placed them at the behest of a government-dominated regulatory agency which removed self-controlling autonomy, normally a defining characteristic of a profession. Occupational ideology was thus imposed.[53] Consequently, journalists merely advanced the western notions of professionalism as a claim for higher status and demanded independence from all controls. Journalists whose roles were significantly affected by a transnational ideology of professionalism often came into direct conflict with the state and its restrictions.[54]

Basic to the understanding of the journalist as a professional, then, is the comprehension of his historical context. To do otherwise is to study the journalist isolated from the institutional past. The postulate of comprehensiveness in the investigation of journalists is connected with the postulate of taking into account their changes and development through history.

Comparative professionalism studies so far have failed to study the journalist in terms of contructs that take into account the totality of his role perception and behavior as influenced by historical and social environment. For increased understanding of journalists in developing countries, it is necessary--methodologically and conceptually--to consider their profession as stemming from history.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

Unstable political conditions confront Third World journalists. Their society's political past, political ideology and current political climate affect performance drastically. According to Pye,[55] the fundamental obstacles for the development of a journalistic profession mean that communicators in many underdeveloped countries are vulnerable to outside pressures from other emerging institutions, such as that of government. Existence of profession may depend on the journalist's "cooperation" with the government. In some countries, the general practice could be allegiance to a particular patron or political party or to act as a "kept" press.

At times the political climate may not be compatible with the social interests or goals of the populace. If a political upheaval is underway, the journalist is invariably the first among the professionals to be subjected to government surveillance. In the case of India's brief Emergency Rule in 1975, pressures were exerted on journalists--both subtle and evident. Newspapers were told they would stand to forfeit the allocation of newsprint supply by the government if they were "out of step with reality." Newspaper houses were threatened, journalists jailed.[56] Similar instances would be coups and counter coups in Bangladesh, Chile, Argentina and Uganda.

Some conditions arising out of political climate have to be considered in studying the journalist of a particular country. These conditions, some pronounced, many subtle, exert pressures on the way the journalist operates. Such conditions demand we examine journalists in terms of internal role, ability to realize distinctive ideals and professional ethics. In an ideal political climate, the press may be called upon to review performances of other social institutions--point out their flaws and bring them to public attention. This role of criticism is ideally viewed as fundamental to the tradition of

journalism. But problems loom large if a weak journalistic institution begins to criticize an institution like the government.

Hence, if we are to apply standards of the advanced nations with political stability, in evaluating the performance of the press in most of the developing countries, the result can only be a fundamentally unsympathetic view of the problems of the journalists in those societies.[57] The watchdog function may even deter progress or emergence of constructive patterns of government. It is just as unrealistic and unhelpful to advocate the ideals of journalistic criticism as to recommend that the press should be the docile apologist of all that government does.[58]

The way journalists operate, again, is dependent on the economic reality of their institution and country. To state that economic aspects are an integral part of the society is to state the obvious. Mass media systems in developing countries, with the advent of new communication technologies and improved economies, have been undergoing rapid changes. Economist Millikan notes: "Of all the technological changes which have been sweeping through the traditional societies of the underdeveloped world in the last decade. . . the most fundamental and pervasive in their effects on human society has been changes in communication."[59] These changes have effects not only on society in general, but on the media professional in particular. In the same sense, according to Schramm, the growth of the mass media has itself become one of the phenomena of economic development. Media development parallels the development of other social institutions and is clearly linked to the indices of such general social and economic growth as literacy, per capita income and urbanization.[60] On the other hand, Pye maintains that improved media economics have not helped the conditions of a journalist at all. The profession still struggles against heavy odds;[61] journalists are underpaid and reporters work long hours for uncertain career rewards.

Moreover, media economics poses research problems when, for instance, a government takes over ownership of "failing" newspapers. This trend of government ownership has been on a large scale. The government owns all the newspapers in Bangladesh, Guyana, Sierre Leone, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi.[62] In Nigeria, every newspaper except one is government-owned. In short, many developing nations have witnessed the steady increase of governmental influence on the profession.

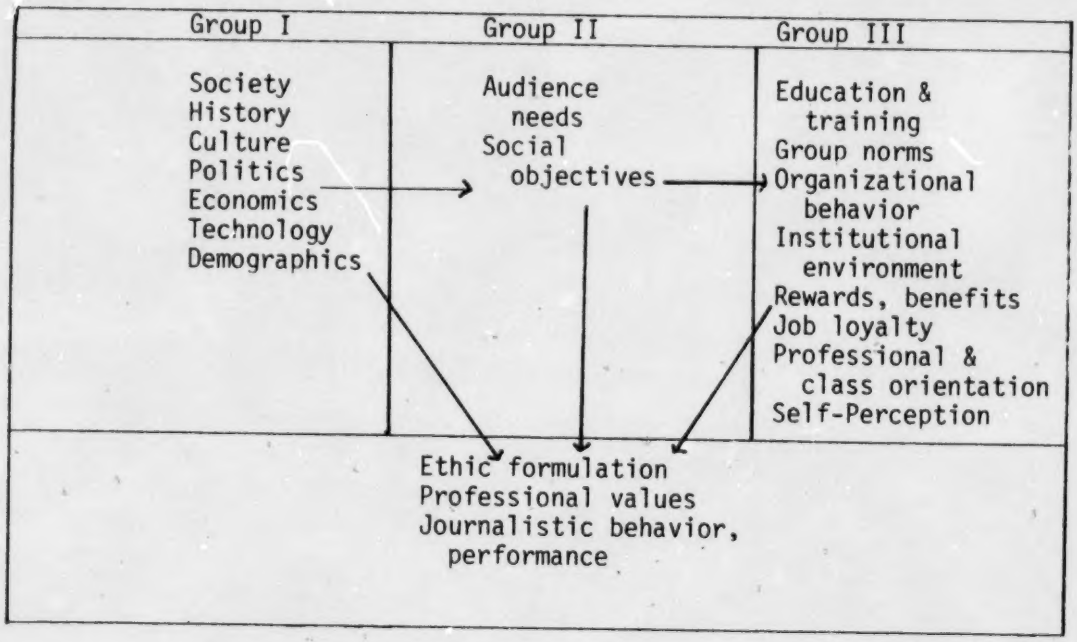
While evaluating the professionalism of the newsmen in these situations, it is imperative not only to consider their pay, rewards and institutional profits, but also to study a wider dimension of national economics with implications arising out of government ownership of the media.

DISCUSSION

Our approach to the study of professionalism in a broad contextual and conceptual framework has important implications for international and comparative communication research. We have presented a holistic view in studying professionalism among journalists in developing countries. Figure 1, though intended to be primarily suggestive, summarizes the main tenets of our discussion. Group I factors should serve as a starting point for comparative professionalism research. Audience needs and social objectives, which stem from Group I factors, also require research considerations (represented in Group II). The present trends in comparative professionalism concentrate mainly on Group III factors from which conclusions are drawn. We believe that mere quantitative measurement of role perception, attitudes, values and other professional attributes (Group III) is inadequate to explore Third World professionalism in the media. For a deeper understanding of the journalists in developing societies, we must explore the journalists' history and socio-cultural, political and economic

FIGURE 1

Determinants of Professionalism
Across Differing Press Systems



environment. Toward that end, we have suggested factors in Group I to be considered for more adequate investigation of the subject. This approach provides a macroscopic view of the journalist--as professional, educator, developer and builder.

Narrowly focused empirical research on comparative professionalism may have some value, but such an approach cannot yield a totality of understanding of a journalist in a developing country. As Adorno wrote, ". . . there is no general social issue which some scientific method. . . could treat universally. . ."[63] To arrive at a broad conceptual framework, we should consider not only the separate facts but the total social reality and its past that Mills called "sociological imagination."[64] That framework may derive from the study of historical, cultural and social differences among journalists and the societies they work in. Communication scholars should evolve methodologies and approaches which examine professionalism at broad levels of journalistic interdependence of mass media and society.

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9. Dario Menanteau-Horta, "Professionalism of Journalists in Santiago de Chile," Journalism Quarterly, 44:4, (Winter, 1967), pp. 715-724.

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12. Lucian Pye, op.cit. Other general works included Robert N. Pierce, "Beyond Developmentalism: Categories in Comparative Journalism," and James Markham, "Internationalizing Professional Communication Curricula," in James W. Markham (ed.) International Communication as a Field of Study, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press), p. 86, p. 139; Jeremy Tunstall, The Media are American, (New York: Columbia University Press), 1977 and "Anglo-American Notions of Communicator Professionalism," paper presented at the Symposium on Professionalism, University of Iowa, Fall, 1975. Others are Floyd G. Arpan, "What is Responsible Press for Emerging Nations?" in Heinz-Dietrich Fisher and John C. Merrill (eds.) International Communication (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1970), Oguz B. Nayman, Dan L. Lattimore, and Manuel Alers-Montawo, "Survey of Journalists in Barcelona, Spain: Problems and Expectations," Gazette, 20:4, (1974), pp. 224-232; Donald K. Wright, "An Analysis of the Level of Professionalism Among Canadian Newsmen," Gazette, 20:3 (1974), pp. 133-144, and Lawrence Day, "The Latin American Journalist: A Tentative Profile," Journalism Quarterly, 45:3, (Fall, 1968), pp. 509-515

13. Swen Windahl and Karl Erik Rosengren, "Professionalization of Swedish Journalists," Gazette, 22:3, (1976), pp. 140-146.

14. Peter Golding, "Media Professionalism in the Third World: The Transfer of an Ideology," in Mass Communication and Society, James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollcott (eds.), (London: Edward Arnold Press, 1977), pp. 291-311. Other British scholars, such as Rita O'Brien, subscribe to this view. See, "Domination and Dependence in Mass Communications: Implications for the Use of Broadcasting in Developing Countries," Institute of Development Studies Bulletin, 6:4, (1975), pp. 85-99.

15. Walery Pisarek expresses the same view when we study mass media systems. See "Marxist-Leninist Theory and Methodology of Media Research: Principles and Directives," paper presented at the International Communications Association Annual Conference, Berlin, West Germany, 1977, p. 6, to study mass media systems. See also, Hanno Hardt, "Communication and the Consequences of Capitalism," unpublished manuscript, University of Iowa.

16. Stuart Hall, "Culture, the Media and the Ideological Effect," James Curran (et.al.), op.cit.

17. These definitions are drawn from Stuart Hall, ibid., p. 318.

18. Raymond Williams, "Base and Super Structure," New Left Review, 85, (1973); quoted by Stuart Hall, ibid.

19. Wilbur Schramm, "Models of Communication Systems," in Communication and Political Development, Lucian Pye (ed.), (New Jersey: University of Princeton Press, 1968), p. 24.

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21. Derek Ingram, "The Luxury of Press Freedom," Atlas World Press Review, 23:11, (November, 1976), p. 45.

22. Ibid.

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25. For elaboration on the variable of "Commitment" in professionalism research see: Lee B. Becker, Idowu A. Sobowale and Robin E. Cobbey, "Commitment to the Field: Reporters and Their Profession," unpublished paper presented at the Annual Conference of Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, 1977, Chicago, Illinois.

26. See Philip Elliott, "Media Organizations and Occupations: An Overview," in James Curran (et.al), op.cit.

27. Ibid.

28. Research exploration of class orientation is predominant in Marxist-Leninist approaches for the study of mass media systems. See Pisarek, op.cit.

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30. Golding, op.cit.

31. O. Stokke, Reporting Africa, (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1971), p. 94: Golding, op.cit.

32. Golding, op.cit.

33. Jack McLeod and Ramona Rush, op.cit.

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35. Golding, op.cit.

36. Tunstall, op.cit.

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42. James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," in Communication, Vol. 2, 1975, p. 7.

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53. Golding, op.cit.

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A B S T R A C T

RECONCEPTUALIZING THE NOTION OF JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALISM ACROSS DIFFERING PRESS SYSTEMS

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The notion of professionalism has generated a great deal of interest in communication research. Researchers' opinions regarding the attributes of journalistic professionalism or what constitutes a professional and what does not have been less than unanimous. The primary purpose of this paper is to raise general questions about the approaches to professionalism and its relevance to the study of professionalism of a journalist in a developing society.

The paper contends that the mere application of Western-evolved professional attributes to study journalists of the Third World is inadequate. What is lacking is the consideration of different theories of societies which are subsumed in any theoretical or paradigmatic approach to systematically evaluate and interpret our definitions and/or attributes of a professional journalist.

Citing the shortcomings of the present empirical approaches, we present a holistic and macroscopic approach for the study of comparative professionalism. Drawing upon the present situation of the Third World press, we offer suggestions to explore the journalist's history, socio-cultural, political and economic environment. Such an approach is necessary to produce a workable conceptual framework with which to study and understand professionalism among Third World Journalists.

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